

8 August 1956

Mr. Boris C. W. Hagelin
Sundsvik, Sweden

Dear Boris:

Thank you very much for your letter of 24 July. The delay in replying to it was occasioned by my taking a couple of weeks' holiday at the same time my secretary was, so that answering correspondence, except that of urgent character has been necessarily delayed.

When I failed to hear from you I called Art and learned from him that everything was well with you and your family and therefore concluded that you were just taking things very easy. This turned out to be the case.

Bo called up last evening to invite us out as soon as we can make it, in order that we may have a reunion with him and his family in their new home. We shall do this just as soon as possible.

With regard to the reprints of my article in the Britannica, I am sorry that the situation appears unclear to you as to what I meant or what they meant. Of course they will be quite satisfied with your "declaration". I am going to put in your order for your account, for 500 copies to be sent to your address in Switzerland, the cost to be billed to you. Since there is no need for hurry in this matter I shall ask them to ship the packets (there will be two of them, to judge by my own experience) by ordinary overseas mail rather than by any other method.

The manuscript to which you refer in your postscript is not of "oriental" origin. It was undoubtedly written in Europe and, I think, somewhere in the early years of the 16th century, say around 1520-30. It goes under the name of the "Voynich Manuscript", after the name of the antiquarian book dealer who found it, circa 1910, in a castle in Southern Italy. You may tell Colonel Arnaud that no copies are available of the complete manuscript, and that I would have to request permission to send him even a page or two if he wants to see what the writing looks like. Three alleged "solutions" have been published thus far, but they are all purely subjective. In my opinion not one word on the over 200 pages of this manuscript has ever been deciphered. The original is deposited in the vaults of the Guaranty Trust Company in New York City; it was valued in 1925 at over \$100,000. Perhaps Colonel Arnaud could find in the Bibliotheque Nationale a copy of the first of the above-mentioned "solutions" which was published in the following book: The cipher of Roger Bacon ... edited with foreword and notes by Roland G. Kent. Author: William Romaine Newbold; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; London: Oxford University Press; 1928, pp. 224. Professor Newbold's last 10 or 12 years of his life were devoted to an attempt to solve the mystery of this manuscript. He thought he had but I assure you that there is nothing to his solution at all, unfortunately.

I was glad to learn about the new things which are materializing and about the move of Mr. Nyberg to Zug.

With the recent marked improvement in my health, we are beginning once more to think about a long visit to Europe during which I would collect some basic historical information in Italy and also visit some of our friends in Europe, including our very dear Boris and Annie.

Affectionately,

1 Incl:
Ltr to Mr. Kober, E.H., dtd 8 Aug 56.